



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

NCTA NEWS

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By NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

Early academics launch career pathways

A career search for agriculture or veterinary health professions begins earlier and earlier for today's young people.

With a statewide academic mission of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, we are helping to guide young people through career explorations in several formats.

- NCTA offers dual credit courses for high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to take a college course taught by NCTA faculty which also earns them high school credits.
- Agricultural academies established by high schools enable students to study a college-level course or two under the tutelage of their agriculture or science teacher with the curriculum from NCTA professors.
- College credits are available in on-line courses for high school and adult learners.
- Middle school or junior high age youth gain exposure to college courses through field trips, after school programs, or grants for "explore it" types of experiences.
- Several of our NCTA faculty and staff mentor youngsters in local elementary schools, churches and youth support programs such as Teammates.
- And, of course, during this National 4-H Week we note the outstanding opportunities for all student members and their families in youth programs of Nebraska Extension.
- Our campus is a regional hub for FFA programs for Career Development Enterprises, judging contests and many experiences for FFA members, including our own NCTA academic program of agricultural education and Collegiate FFA Club.

Throughout the year, not just during school-time semesters, our NCTA faculty and staff are actively engaged with young people in hands-on learning sessions in the field, laboratory, youth camps, livestock arena and classroom.

These include Livestock Judging Camp, Horticulture Camp, Agronomy Youth Field Day, county fairs, Nebraska Range Camp, and much more.

For the past two years, for example, two NCTA professors have served as teachers for high school-aged youngsters in a summer program based in Holdrege. Youth came to NCTA for day camps and hands-on learning for agronomy in 2017 and in animal science this last summer.

Educational Service Unit #11 provided this student immersion in science and career exploration. We appreciate their encouragement to young people which brings them to our NCTA campus.

On the high school level, several public institutions have created linkages with technical and community colleges, and with four-year institutions for coursework in post-secondary education.

In recent years, York Public Schools was the first to establish an ag academy in dual credit courses where students such can earn an ag chemical application certificate.

Donovan Buss planned his career path as a high school sophomore at York. He took NCTA courses in the YPS ag academy along with classes from Southeast Community College.

When he arrived at our NCTA campus in fall semester, 2017, Donovan was already a college sophomore with 36 credit hours. He will graduate in December with an NCTA degree and transfer to the University of Nebraska to complete his bachelor's degree in the next year and a half.

An ag academy is also in place with North Platte High School (primarily in animal science) and a course agreement for Bryan High School in Omaha (which has the state's largest FFA membership).

More academic agreements are being put into place soon for two to three more high schools, slated to begin in 2019 or 2020.

For further information about NCTA's online offerings, see details at <https://ncta.unl.edu/dual-credit-and-agricultural-academy-available-courses>. The list includes a class from veterinary technology and one from agribusiness management, three from agronomy and natural resources, and four in animal science and livestock management.

We say thank you to all educators, guidance counselors and program volunteers who give guidance to young people for a future in our agricultural and animal health industries.

See this article online: <https://go.unl.edu/tic7>

NCTA Events:

October:

12-13 – Aggie Rodeo Team to Fargo, North Dakota

12-14 – Aggie Ranch Horse Team to Fort Collins, Colorado CSU Silver Jubilee

12-14 – Aggie Shooting Sports Team to Grand Island

15-16 – Fall Break, No classes, Offices open

NCTA Mission: *The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.*



North Platte students observe Dr. Doug Smith demonstrate equipment for processing cattle during health checkups at the NCTA Red Barn. The students visited campus last fall to learn animal science skills. (NCTA file photo)